

Multiculturalism

Business Case for Diversity

Forum ■ February 11, 2000

Summary Report

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Summary Report Business Case for Diversity Forum

February 11, 2000, Vancouver

Multiculturalism BC, a division of the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration, launched the province's Multiculturalism Week by hosting the *Business Case for Diversity Forum*. The Ministry was proud to sponsor the event in partnership with Leadership Vancouver, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility and the Vancouver Board of Trade.

The forum promoted the benefits of a culturally diverse business sector and provided participants with networking opportunities. Participants were invited to explore diversity strategies that would yield an increased marketshare, examine avenues available to effectively manage diversity in the workforce, and audit practical results from corporate diversity initiatives.

Multiculturalism BC would like to thank the 180 panelists, consultants and representatives from the corporate, government, and NGO sectors for their continued commitment to diversity in business. This report is a summary of panelist presentations and participant feedback.

Opening Ceremony

J. Paul Stevenson

Leader, Vancouver Metis Community

The forum began with an Aboriginal opening prayer ceremony.

Peter Ladner

Publisher, Business in Vancouver

Peter Ladner, publisher of *Business in Vancouver*, moderated the forum. Mr. Ladner identified the objectives of the Business Case for Diversity, highlighting the Ministry's goal of linking government initiatives with the business sector.



Stephen R. Stackhouse.

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration

The Deputy Minister acknowledged the forum's supporting partners and outlined the goals of the *Multiculturalism Act*. The Act seeks to develop culturally-responsive services and create cross-cultural understanding by eliminating barriers to full participation of all British Columbians in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the province.

The Deputy Minister noted the corporate sector has responded to the growing cultural diversity of this province. Many businesses have recognized the importance of diversity as a social and economic reality. The forum represented an opportunity to recognize these efforts, share knowledge and build on the successes and various strengths of the participants.

Keynote Speaker

Trevor Wilson

Diversity Strategist, T WI Inc.

The keynote speaker Trevor Wilson addressed the "Business Case for Diversity." Wilson linked the concepts of multiculturalism and diversity, noting that the very definition of 'multiculturalism' embraces the concept of building united communities.

Mr. Wilson outlined an evaluation tool he termed the "Equity Continuum" which gauges diversity in corporations. The continuum creates five distinct levels of acceptance within the workplace:

Level 1: Compliance

These organizations are motivated by compliance. Their aim is to meet their legal or other obligations (e.g. collective agreements, labour laws, contracts), to avoid the negative consequences of non-compliance. These organizations focus on equality (treating everyone in the same way), rather than diversity (respecting people's differences). Initiatives generally stop if the external requirements driving the initiatives change or fall away. Organizations at this level have primarily a reactive approach to implementing equity initiatives. Wilson described this level as "one step ahead of the sheriff."

Level 2: Moving Beyond Compliance — Being Seen to Do Good

These organizations recognize the value behind going beyond simple compliance. They aim to support groups that have been historically disadvantaged, recognizing the benefits of their internal and public image. Equity in these organizations means being seen to "do the right thing for disadvantaged groups." Initiatives that go beyond compliance usually stop if the leadership or public interest driving those initiatives changes or falls away.

These organizations are likely to have one or more diversity initiatives in place, but these are isolated efforts that typically support high visibility programs or the promotion of designated group members into visible positions. No plan is in place to integrate diversity into all aspects of human resource management nor the larger organizational culture.

Level 3: The Business Case — Doing Diversity

These organizations understand that certain diversity initiatives can improve organizational efficiency, recruitment, employee retention, team effectiveness or market related opportunities. They evaluate diversity initiatives qualitatively and quantitatively to identify programs that will positively affect the future viability of the organization. Representation numbers at this stage are a means to an end rather than the focus of the diversity strategy. Initiatives can survive the loss of employee or public interest if the business case driving the initiatives remain valid. These organizations use an inclusive definition of diversity with the vision of creating an environment that is equitable for all.

Level 4: Integrated Diversity — Being Diverse

These organizations have internalized diversity as a core organizational value. Diversity is viewed by key opinion leaders as an essential element of continued growth. Diversity is integrated into all aspects of the organization and all employees consider themselves responsible for creating an environment that is fair and equitable for all. The commitment to diversity is not affected by economic trends. The focus on diversity only modifies to align with changes that occur in the organization's core values. Level Fours are motivated by the merit principle for all employees and are viewed by a wide range of people as an "Employer and Supplier of Choice".

Level 5: Global Employers and Suppliers of Choice

These organizations have achieved their internal vision of equity for all and now seek to foster diversity beyond their own boundaries. Their motivation stems from the principle that diversity is an organizational, community, national or even global imperative. Diversity needs no special internal consideration as its value, importance and necessity are firmly integrated into all aspects of organizational life. They recognize that diversity contributes to a strong economy, which benefits all participants including the organization. They encourage other organizations to move along The Equity Continuum™ and stop only when they recognize that others are not committed to diversity.

Mr. Wilson cited examples of companies and organizations at each level of the Equity Continuum™ and concluded by recommending "The Loyalty Link" by Dennis McCarthy as an excellent diversity resource.

The keynote was followed by a brief question and answer period.

Workshops

SESSION I

Increasing Your Marketshare

Moderator: Peter Ladner, Publisher, Business in Vancouver

Kenneth Wong

Director, Client Services, Hamazaki Wong Marketing Group

- Recently joined Hamazaki Wong, a marketing group that has been involved with large-scale civic programs including the *Canadian Dragon Boat Festival*, and *First Night*.
- Outlined how the group developed an ethnospecific campaign for the Chinese community to market Tropicana Orange Juice — the only not-from-concentrate juice on the Canadian market in 1991.
- Research indicated the "Florida image" of fresh, quality oranges was an important factor in marketing to the community. Marketing research also showed a community preference for fresh fruit over juice products.
- Developed a print ad campaign featuring a fresh orange with appropriate Chinese copy.
- Advised Tropicana to sponsor community events including the *Sunbrite Lunar New Year's Festival* and SUCCESS's *Walk with the Dragon*.
- Product was promoted at the events with free samples, focus groups, and discount coupons. The coupons saw a 15 per cent higher redemption rate than the industrial average.
- Created new Chinese-language commercials after determining English TV ads (and Chinese dubs) were inappropriate.
- Advised workshop participants to ensure translations are effective, and tested for the desired target group.
- Campaign successfully established Tropicana Juice as the number one choice for the Chinese community.

Jeff Schulz

Vice President, Marketing, VanCity Credit Union

- Van City provides full financial services at 39 branches, and has a reputation for being a leader in the area of corporate social responsibility.
- Services are offered in many languages including Chinese, Punjabi, Italian, and French. Signage is posted in each branch to inform clients of the staff's language capabilities.
- Cultural Advisors were hired to assist the marketing department in developing local programs to benefit various communities.
- Comprehensive community liaison has resulted in a decreased need for ethnospecific advertising in recent years.

- Developed a partnership with the Immigrant Services Society to provide financial services for Kosovo refugees, including a training program to familiarize them with North American banking technology.
- Van City's outreach model for diverse markets includes determining issues and challenges in the target community, then developing appropriate programs.
- Outreach has been directed at women entrepreneurs and the gay/lesbian communities.
- Extensive involvement through the Van City Foundation with a wide-range of communities including environmental, disability, arts, gay/lesbian and immigrant groups. The activities have provided important links to grassroots communities.
- Van City's marketing approach is based on this grassroots perspective.

Sharon Hemstock

Owner, Star Life Health

- Background includes banking, private financial consulting and community services.
- Established Star Life Health to market health products for Nikken — a 25 year-old Japanese company specializing in magnetic and infrared energy products.
- Nikken researched its market, determined a health trend focused on prevention, and is now globally the largest supplier of prevention products.
- The company researched foreign markets to assess the needs, then expanded into the new markets with products modified to fit the new consumer.
- When Nikken enters a new market it meets the legal requirements, establishes local and foreign distributors and updates the global network via the Internet every eight minutes.
- Marketing concept is based on a network business of direct marketing and personal contact.
- Demographics show baby-boomers are paying more attention to health issues with an increase in healthcare dollars now going to complementary medicine.
- Web site, brochures and other marketing material are available in several languages.

David Choi

Chair, City of Vancouver Economic Development Commission

- Vancouver's demographics indicate a multicultural, multi-lingual city greatly affected by immigration in the last twenty years.
- There are radio and television programs in 17 languages available in Vancouver.
- Commission staff has many language capabilities and can serve global markets.
- Commission hires interns from BC schools to promote understanding of different cultures and different business markets.
- 14 Commissioners provide diverse high-profile international networks and are renowned within the industries they represent.
- Materials are published in different languages including Chinese, Spanish, Italian and German. The Commission has a multi-lingual Web site.

- Has developed an Online corporate registry in partnership with the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture.
- Advocated trade missions as an effective vehicle for exploratory trips to foreign markets.

SESSION II

Managing Diversity

Moderator: Debra Elliott, President, Canadian Business for Social Responsibility

Suzanne Rutherford

VP Personal Wealth Management, BC Region, Royal Trust

- Outlined the Royal Bank Financial Group's (RBF) diversity initiatives and the importance diversity holds within the organization.
- Diversity was embraced to gain a business advantage — to distinguish RBF as a socially responsible corporate leader.
- Three intersecting and overlapping elements of business diversity include workforce diversity, structural diversity and marketplace diversity.
- Leveraging diversity maximized RBF's high potential businesses by empowering people and businesses to work at peak efficiencies.
- Maintained a positive corporate image and developed leaders who took risks, saw opportunities and lead change.
- RBF leadership's commitment to diversity is reflected in many ways including diversity workshops for the Executive Team and Senior Management, as well as "Diversity Champions" throughout the network.
- Diversity has been incorporated as part of the business plan and is discussed on a quarterly basis with management and staff.
- When diversity is tied to business results, you get more "buy-in" from people. If you can make this connection, you must have the mechanisms in place to make people accountable.
- Overall, embracing diversity is "just the right thing to do" — it translates into measurable business results.

Hal Booker

Manager Human Resources and Administration, Ebco Industries Ltd.

- Ebco Industries is a manufacturing company in Richmond, started by Helmut and Hugo Eppich — twin brothers who came to Canada in 1955.
- Gained a reputation within community groups as a place that welcomed people from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- Success of the company's soccer team prompted Ebco to research and develop a corporate "UN Charter" requiring all employees to respect the diversity of their co-workers. Now over 60 nationalities represented in their workforce.

- Encourages respect for various religious holidays, with workplace food festivals sponsored by ethnocultural groups. Employees are given time off for religious observance, with varied breaks scheduled for those who need to pray.
- Ebco does business throughout the world, with access to a wide recruitment pool and a workforce that speaks and translates many languages.
- When tensions arise between different staff ethnic groups, Ebco upholds the company charter and encourages respect for the corporation's values.
- Diversity has been an important ingredient of Ebco's success.

Elise Rees

Partner, Ernst & Young

- A 1992 environmental assessment by a new diversity committee led to the creation of diversity initiatives.
- In the late 80's and early 90's, Ernst & Young experienced high staff turnover, with the notable departure of many women — 92 per cent of the company's partners were male in 1992.
- 1992 report found the company was not successfully diverse — changed the culture of Ernst & Young.
- Hired Trevor Wilson and obtained "buy-in" from top levels of the organization.
- CEO supported the designation of a "Champion of Diversity," established the Director of Diversity position and created a Diversity Advisory Council.
- Ernst & Young is now a professional services organization in 134 countries and 641 cities — has recognized people are its key resource and understands that valuing diversity means recognizing differences.
- Wants to be a role model for its clients, working with employees who also value diversity.
- Women currently account for 12% of Partners, and the Senior Principals Level has seen notable increases in the percentage of women, with progress also shown at other levels of the company.
- Awareness and diversity initiatives are incorporated in the company's newsletters — also have a virtual diversity forum on the Intranet site, and a flexible work arrangement policy.

Paul Stevenson

CEO, Booker Gold Explorations Ltd.

- Offers the perspective of a smaller company that operates in a different environment.
- Mining exploration company with much of its business conducted in remote exploration camps: not a traditional office.
- Company's work takes place in or near Aboriginal communities so the company has made a conscious effort to reach out to these communities as part of its work.

- Besides giving a "step up" to these communities by hiring Aboriginal people to work in camps, the company ensures that information is provided to local communities about the work undertaken.
- Managing diversity can sometimes be made difficult by political concerns, such as land claims talks and the treaty process — the company believes it is important to work as a team in the Aboriginal communities.
- Visible minorities work together in the exploration camps — building bridges with various communities has helped the company, with many advantages gained as the mining sector tries to pull out of the current economic downturn.
- Company has seen economic advantages to hiring local Aboriginal people — no travel costs, ability to access services locally.

SESSION III

Measuring Diversity in your Business

Moderator: Inder Mehat, A/Director, Multiculturalism BC

Trevor Wilson

Diversity Strategist, TWI Inc.

- The Trinity Group was established in 1997.
- The Trinity Group started examining how to detail different levels of competency for diversity in business and developed a method to help guide businesses as they move from one level to the next.
- The levels, called an "equity continuum," rank companies on a scale of zero through five — where five designates a business that serves as a role model for diversity.
- Discussed developing a "Diversity Standards Initiative" to create a common standard that guides the implementation and management of diversity programs in companies.
- Several tools were presented to measure diversity and assist businesses in moving from one level of the "equity continuum" to the next.
- Virtual diversity network is currently being created — anyone interested in getting more information on the network can e-mail TWI at diversityatwork@com.
- TWI will also pilot a project in Toronto examining the core competencies of an equitable leader.
- A public sector tool for measuring diversity is available on Internet at www.diversitystandard.com

Participant Feedback

Many respondents took the time to provide Multiculturalism BC with feedback on assistance the Ministry could provide to meet their diversity needs. The majority of the respondents requested a videotape of the forum, participant list, and information on literature available on the subject matter.

The majority of participants found the forum to be a strong educational tool assisting in the identification of key issues in the area of diversity in business. An overwhelming majority of respondents expressed interest in another diversity forum.

Multiculturalism BC thanks all the participants for their contributions to the Business Case for Diversity Forum.

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